

“What Everyone Should Know About the Holy Spirit” Part 7 - 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 – December 27th, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part seven, which is the last in a series I've titled, "What Everyone Should Know About the Holy Spirit."
- The chapter comes to an end, and with it this series, but not before the Apostle Paul paints a rather bleak picture of the church.
- More specifically, the unhealthy condition of the church body there in Corinth, especially concerning the role of the Holy Spirit.

- Actually this is why both letters to the Corinthians were corrective in the sense that this particular church was a very carnal one.
- So much so, that they actually had a derogatory term in which they would call someone a "Corinthian," in order to insult them.
- This because, Corinth was widely seen as one of the most immoral cities, and carnal churches, in the known world at that time.

- Enter today's text where Paul explains why the Holy Spirit is so important as it relates to the gifts and different parts of the body.
- Namely, that we're all given different gifts as different parts of the same body and this for the benefit of the entire body of Christ.
- As we're about to see, it's the paramount importance of this benefit to the body of Christ that Paul will underscore and highlight.

8. We are all different parts of the same body (Verses 27-31)

- v27-28 Paul says we are the body of Christ with each one as a part, then lists eight different gifts and callings God placed in it.
- v29-30 He asks, are all apostles, prophets, teachers, or do all work miracles, have gifts of healing, tongues or the interpretation.
- v31 He encourages them to eagerly desire the greater gifts, and then he says that he will yet show them the most excellent way.

- What Paul is saying here is that all the gifts to the body, and the parts of the body, are foundational in the building of the church.
- This explains why God has ordained that we're all different in our gifting and calling such that, some are parts of the foundation.
- In other words, we are all different parts, of the same body, with the same importance, in our function within the body of Christ.

Ephesians 2:19–22 (NIV) — 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- Here's where I'm going with all this, the church today, like the Corinthian church in that day, is at a defining moment in history.
- I would suggest the jury is still out on whether or not the church today will build each other up or instead tear each other down.
- I find it interesting that in the conclusion of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthian church he says this is why he writes to them.

2 Corinthians 13:10 (NIV) — 10 This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

- I find it equally as interesting how in Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia that he specifically identifies that which tears down.
- He identifies both legalism and criticism as being destructive to the body of Christ, which characterized the Galatian churches.
- It seems they were tearing each other down by bringing Christians back under the bondage of fulfilling the Old Testament law.

Galatians 5:14–15 (NIV) — 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

- I suppose the question becomes one of, if legalism and criticism will tear each other down, then what will build each other up?
- Actually Paul provides the answer in the aforementioned Galatians 4:14 and our text today, 1 Corinthians 12:31, which is love!
- In Galatians he quotes Jesus saying, "Love your neighbor as yourself," and Corinthians, he says love is the more excellent way.

- Love, as the "more excellent way," sort of paves the way for one of the most famous chapters in all the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13.
- What's not so well known about this chapter, is the "why" behind the "what" of the "love chapter," as it's come to be known as.
- The reason why Paul writes about love is that instead of loving and building each other up, they were tearing each other down.

- The way they were tearing each other down was by attacking other members of the body, whom they deemed as unimportant.
- To me, this explains why Paul rebukes them by rhetorically asking them if all have all the same gifts in verse thirty of our text.
- Instead of, in love, building up those with a different calling or gifting, they were puffing themselves up in their calling and gifting.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (NIV) — 1 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

- In the upcoming New Year we like never before are going to need the gifting and calling of every Christian in the body of Christ.
- If we continue to attack and devour each other as the body of Christ simply put, it may be devastating in the days that lie ahead.
- By devastating I mean, our Christianity individually, and Christianity corporately, will suffer needlessly, at the hands of the Devil.

- You'll forgive me for coming off as sensational when I say this but I'm personally of the belief that there are difficult days ahead.
- As such, we're going to need all the parts of the body of Christ in ways that we can't even begin to understand or even believe.
- I would submit, in years past, the world we had lived in have been more forgiving of what I'll call, "carnal Christian cannibalism."

- If there was ever a time for loving and building each other up instead of devouring and tearing each other down the time is now.
- In order to know and understand what that love is like, we'll need look no further than to the next chapter, we begin next week.
- While I'm not a fan of New Year's resolutions, I think it would be appropriate to resolve to be more loving of each other in 2016.